

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Regional Administrator
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Region 9, Arizona, California
Hawaii, Nevada, Guam
American Samoa,
Northern Marianas Islands



For Immediate Release: August 23, 2011

Contact: Wendy Chavez, chavez.wendy@epa.gov, 415.947.4248

\$1,000,000 EPA Enforcement Action Against Kettleman City Hazardous Waste Landfill

Chemical Waste Management required to make significant improvements to its facility and laboratory

SAN FRANCISCO – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a settlement with Chemical Waste Management requiring the company to pay a \$400,000 fine and spend an estimated \$600,000 to comply with environmental laws after the facility failed to properly manage waste at its landfill near Kettleman City, Calif.

“Significant shortcomings at Chemical Waste Management’s lab compromised their ability to accurately assess the toxicity of materials being disposed in their landfill. As a result, EPA has required an outside lab be used for at least two years,” said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA’s Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. “At a hazardous waste landfill, shoddy science undermines public confidence that environmental compliance is occurring,” added Blumenfeld.

Today’s settlement is a result of a joint U.S. EPA and California Department of Toxic Substances Control investigation in February 2010. An analysis of the landfill’s records showed that the facility’s laboratory had not been following proper quality control procedures since 2005. EPA made a preliminary recommendation that the company switch to using an outside laboratory, which it has done since May 2010. The investigation found records indicating the facility disposed of waste that did not fully meet standards for treatment prior to disposal. In addition, the facility disposed of hazardous waste leachate from the landfill without assuring the leachate met treatment standards.

There is no evidence to suggest that the landfill’s violations posed any danger to nearby communities or workers at the facility.

[Under the terms of the settlement](#), the facility must use an outside laboratory for a minimum of two years to verify that its hazardous wastes meet treatment standards prior to disposal. The facility is required to install an advanced record management system, and purchase new equipment before it is allowed to perform all analyses in its own laboratory. It must also make physical and operational changes in its leachate management system. EPA will continue to vigorously monitor each of the improvements outlined in the settlement.

In the past eighteen months, EPA has also investigated potential impacts on the Kettleman community from polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs. At EPA’s request, Chemical Waste Management conducted a highly detailed study of carcinogenic PCB congeners and potential off-site impacts. This was the first scientific study of this magnitude and cost at a PCB disposal facility. The [results](#), released in January 2011, showed there was no evidence that PCBs from facility operations migrate offsite at concentrations that adversely affect the health of local residents or the environment. EPA also conducted an air sampling

study, and in February 2011 released a [report](#) documenting that the facility's waste ponds were not significant sources of harmful emissions.

In a separate action in November 2010, [EPA levied a \\$300,000 fine](#) against the company for failing to properly manage PCBs within the facility.

The Chemical Waste Management Kettleman Hills facility is a commercial hazardous waste facility located in Kings County, Calif. The facility handles the treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous waste, PCBs, and non-hazardous waste.

The EPA regulates hazardous waste under authority of the [Resource Conservation and Recovery Act](#), and PCBs under authority of the [Toxic Substance Control Act](#).

For more information, please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/region9/kettleman>

###